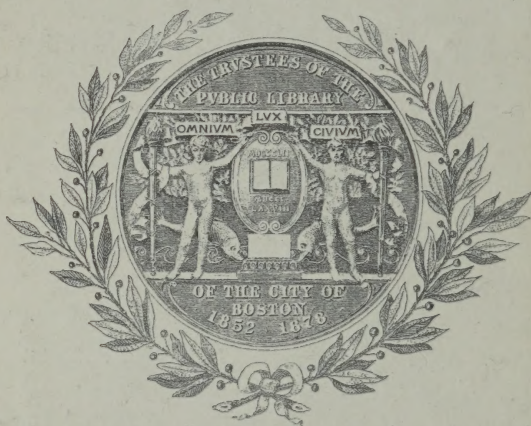


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TO THE WHIGS OF MARYLAND.

In response to the communications received from many of my brother Whigs, I deem it my privilege, in this manner, to counsel with all in relation to the course which patriotism and duty would seem to indicate as proper in the present political crisis.

No lover of his country whose judgment is unbiassed by party zeal and uncontrolled by Northern or Southern fanaticism can fail to see and deprecate the pending danger to the Union.

The first duty of every man who loves his country and her institutions is to provide for their safety. The life of the nation is in danger. It must be saved; then, and not till then, will it be permissible to us to discuss our differences of opinion upon minor subjects.

I say that the life of the Union is in danger, because, for the first time in our history, a party has been formed composed exclusively of citizens of one section of the country, bound together by the single bond of an alliance for offensive warfare against the other section. That the success of such a party would imperil the Union has been recently demonstrated by an address of Mr. Fillmore, and will, it is submitted, be apparent to all who will bestow a moment's consideration upon the existing posture of political affairs.

The value of the slave property of the South is not less than two thousand millions of dollars, a sum equal to one-fourth the value of all the other property in the United States, as shown by the last census. This property is not only recognised, but so far guarantied by the Constitution as to impose upon the Federal Government the duty of restoring to his owner the slave who may escape into another State or Territory of the United States. For years past this constitutional obligation

has been not only repudiated by *some* of the non-slaveholding States, but political parties have been organized in *all* with the avowed object of liberating the slave, and thus not only depriving the South of this vast amount of property, but subjecting it to all the horrors which would necessarily result from such a consummation. In addition to all this, whilst the abolitionists on the one hand openly avow their opposition to the Constitution and their desire to destroy a Government which imposes obligations repudiated by them, on the other hand many Southern men, goaded by the incessant attacks of their Northern fellow-citizens upon their feelings, their property, and their constitutional rights, express the belief that the interests of the South would be more effectually protected by a separation of the slave from the non-slaveholding States, and therefore rather promote than interpose to prevent a result so calamitous. We have hitherto disregarded the danger which such a state of feeling and such a course of action would indicate as most imminent, because we have assumed that such sentiments and action could only be attributed to a small minority of our Northern brethren. But now, when this sectional exasperation has been made available for the inauguration of a party calling itself Republican, under whose banner, for the first time in the history of the Country, this sectional opposition to Southern rights and interests have *united* in nominating, with alleged probabilities of success, a purely sectional ticket, for the Presidency and Vice Presidency of the United States, we can no longer shut our eyes to the reality of the threatened danger; we cannot but feel that the success of such a party would be the death knell of the Union. The unpatriotic purposes of this sectional party are but too manifest. Many of its supporters avow their object and purpose to be disunion, and have even gone so far in the madness of their fanaticism as to desecrate the flag of our country by obliterating from its constellation the fifteen stars which represent the slaveholding States, and displaying *as their party banner* that flag with but sixteen of its stars remaining, to represent the sixteen non-slaveholding States. It is manifest

that those who disavow the object are not ignorant of the inevitable result.

The Whigs of Maryland, whom I have the honor to address, need no proof to convince *them* that calamitous consequences would flow from the success of this sectional party. They each and all *know* that the election of Mr. Fremont, and the administration of the Government by him upon the principles of *his* party, would necessarily occasion a dissolution of the Federal Union, to which *they* have been taught to look as the source of national strength and of individual prosperity and happiness.

I have known the Whigs of my State too long, I estimate their patriotism too highly, I have associated with them too intimately, to suppose it necessary for a moment to offer an argument to *them* in behalf of their country. They appreciate as fully as I could depict, the horrors of disunion; they will see the loss of national strength, the internal dissensions, the fatal check to civilization and freedom, the contempt of the world which would be the consequences of such a calamity. The Whigs of Maryland, who have followed the lead of such patriots as Clay and Webster, "will never keep step to any other music than that of the Union."

It therefore only remains to inquire what course shall be taken to rebuke sectional fanaticism and preserve our country from the dangers of its success.

You are aware that this Republican party, which we all agree must be put down at all hazards, is opposed by two other party organizations: the American, headed by Messrs. Fillmore and Donelson, and the Democratic, led on by Messrs. Buchanan and Breckinridge. You will recollect that Mr. Fillmore, prior to his recent visit to Europe, abandoned the Whig party and became a member of the former of these organizations, which boasted that it had risen upon the downfall of the Whig party, and which proclaimed that the corruptions of the Whig and Democratic parties constituted the necessity of its existence. You know that he and Andrew Jackson Donelson have been nominated by this party (not by the Whig party) for the Presidency and Vice Presidency, and you will admit that the princi-

ples of proscription because of religious opinions, and other reputed tenets of this new party, are in direct antagonism with the principles of that good old Whig party to which *we* are still attached, and which has been abandoned by Mr. Fillmore. It is not my object in referring to these facts to deny to the American party, since the secession of its abolition adherents, a fair claim to nationality; nor to deny the patriotism and virtue of Mr. Fillmore, nor his eminent qualification for the office of Chief Magistrate. But I do deduce from them the necessary conclusion that, as Whigs, we owe no party allegiance to Messrs. Fillmore and Donelson, members and nominees of the American party. I deduce the conclusion that, as Whigs, we are not only at liberty, but that as patriots we are bound, by every obligation to our country and posterity, to throw aside, on the one hand, the feelings of hostility which Mr. Fillmore's desertion of our party would be calculated to engender, and, on the other hand, to forget for the time our former battles with the Democratic party, and to ask ourselves but one question—*which* of the *two* national organizations offers the *best guarantee* of success in crushing out of existence this new and monstrous sectional party, which threatens the life of your country?

I do not propose to examine the relative claims of the two national parties or their nominees to our support. It is not, in my judgment, permissible in the present crisis to interpose our individual differences of opinion upon minor questions. It is sufficient for us to know that the election of either national nominee would secure the Union; and the only question permitted by patriotism is, whether our support of the one or the other would more certainly prove successful?

But before I proceed to this inquiry, having shown that no political allegiance to Messrs. Fillmore and Donelson will interpose to prevent the fair exercise of our judgment on that side, I propose briefly to inquire whether there is any thing to prevent our support of the Democratic nominees, if after investigation we shall believe that our vote in their favor would more certainly secure the safety of our country. It cannot have escaped your observation that the political principles upon which

the Whig and Democratic parties have battled for thirty years, with varied success, have been for the most part settled by the fiat of the people, and that such as have not been so definitely disposed of have either been abandoned by the one or adopted by the other of those parties; so that now the representatives of the people in the halls of State and Federal legislation are found indiscriminately advocating and opposing the same principles and measures. Not only is there no principle of political antagonism which should prevent Whigs and Democrats acting together for the benefit of their common country, but it is confidently submitted that upon the only vital question, that which now agitates and endangers the country, the two parties fully accord. The Whig and Democratic platforms upon the slavery question in eighteen hundred and fifty-two were identical; and there being no Whig nominees before the people, it *might* be suggested that consistency would rather require than oppose the support of the Democratic nominees by Whigs. The controlling inquiry to the patriot now recurs, *which of the two national organizations can by his vote be made most certainly successful.*

Every Maryland Whig will be bound by every tie of duty to vote as his judgment shall decide this question.

It may not be immaterial to observe that neither of the national nominees will obtain throughout this broad land any votes which will not be cast by national conservative citizens, and it is to be regretted that in this crisis that vote should be divided between *two national* candidates, whilst the entire anti-national vote will be concentrated upon the sectional nominee. To judge of the relative strength of the two national organizations it is unnecessary to trace minutely the origin of the American party. It is sufficient to bring to your recollection that it was originally composed, North and South, of the dissatisfied members of the two old parties, and that in the North its original members were chiefly those who opposed the conservative principle upon the slavery question avowed in the platforms of the two old parties. It must not escape your recollection that upon the nomination of Messrs. Fillmore and Donelson a

large majority of the Northern Delegates seceded from the Convention, declared their intention not to support those nominees, and subsequently united in the nomination of Mr. Fremont. This separation of the sectional from the national portion of the American party has occurred in every Northern State in the Confederacy. I deduce from these facts the nationality of the supporters of Messrs. Fillmore and Donelson, and I submit the inquiry for the honest decision of those to whom this paper is addressed, *what non-slaveholding State can this national branch of the American party, thus shorn of the larger portion of its original strength, promise its nominees?* Let the Whigs of Maryland ponder upon the view of this subject I have endeavored to present to their consideration, and no one of them will say that a single non-slaveholding State is certain for Fillmore and Donelson. Time, *I think*, will develop the fact that Messrs. Fillmore and Donelson will be left without an electoral ticket in most of the free States, and it is at any rate the deliberate conviction of my judgment that they will not carry a single non-slaveholding State in the Union. If I am right, or even approximate the truth in the view I have taken, it will necessarily follow that any conservative vote for the American nominees North will be equivalent to a vote for Mr. Fremont, as it will be a vote taken from Mr. Buchanan, his only real competitor.

It is clear, then, that to the South alone can the friends of Messrs. Fillmore and Donelson look for the probable chance of an electoral vote; and it is to the States of Maryland, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri that they profess to look with the greatest hope of success. It is manifest that if this hope were realized, it might indeed prevent the election of Messrs. Buchanan and Breckinridge by the people, but it would only throw the election of President into the *present House of Representatives*, composed as that House now is. Does not the election by this same House, after a contest of two months, of a Black Republican Speaker, admonish us of the danger of such an experiment? Who can doubt that our political fabric would be shaken to its very foundations by this election of President

being thrown upon the present House of Representatives? On the other hand, is it not certain, beyond the contingency of a doubt, that the vote of the States indicated for Mr. Buchanan, when added to that of the other Southern States, would *secure* his election and the consequent safety of the Union? It is obvious that in this condition of the canvass the only serious contest is that between Fremont and Buchanan; that the only possible result that the most sanguine of the friends of Fillmore and Donelson can hope to attain is to carry the contest into the House of Representatives. Who can conceive any thing more fatal to the peace of the country, more insane in political action, than such a course of conduct leading to such a result? Suppose Mr. Fillmore to reach the House of Representatives with the votes of four or five States, (his utmost possible strength) no man can seriously contend that he would be elected President, and assuredly few will be found bold enough to assert that, under such circumstances, he ought to be. The only effect, then of giving the electoral vote of any portion of the South to Mr. Fillmore would be to transfer the contest between Mr. Buchanan and Fremont from the hustings to the House of Representatives; and the danger to our country, now sufficiently menacing, would, in that event, be appalling indeed. Who can contemplate the occurrence of such a contingency without feeling that he would be a traitor to his country if he failed to exert every possible effort to avert so awful a calamity?

I deem it, then, to be *my* duty, as well as that of all who believe with me that the election of Fremont would be the death-knell of the Union, to unite in the support of Messrs. Buchanan and Breckinridge; and I shall sustain their election to the best of my ability. Whilst I concede that there are certain principles hitherto professed by the party which nominated them that cannot receive our support, yet on the great issues of the constitutional rights of the South the platform on which they stand meets my cordial approval, and is in accordance with that of the party which I now address, and to whose kind favor I owe the honor of holding the seat I now

occupy, and which I shall cease to hold after the 4th of March next by the fiat of that party to which Mr. Fillmore has attached himself, and which is now dominant in the Legislature of my native State.

Let Maryland Whigs remember that the political battle now being fought is one of the deepest interest to them; that the maintenance of the constitutional rights of the South is the issue tendered to the American people by the Democratic party, and (as the Whigs have no candidate) by that party alone; that upon this issue the Republican party have staked the Union; and in such a battle, upon such an issue, they must be true to those who are doing battle in our behalf. It would be indeed sad if, in such a contest, the conservative strength of the country should not be united; it would be as strange as sad if, in such a contest, Southern men should not be found battling shoulder to shoulder for the maintenance of their own constitutional rights.

In thus accomplishing what I believe to be a duty, I shall be inexpressibly gratified if I shall find myself sustained by the approval of my fellow-Whigs, who have refused to abandon either the party or the principles in support of which we have so long and so faithfully united, and which we shall remain at perfect liberty to re-organize as soon as our common efforts shall have succeeded in averting the perils that now threaten our beloved country.

THOMAS G. PRATT.



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